

resident who played his special brand of Cleveland-style polka music to countless fans of his band, "The Casuals."

Born in Cleveland, Mr. Toriskie started his first band while a student at South High School. He spread the joyous message of polka for the rest of his life. Over the past 30 years, Mr. Toriskie led his band, the Casuals, to the peaks of the polka music profession. He was nominated as Musician of the Year by the Cleveland Style Polka Hall of Fame last year. The Casuals were also nominated as Band of the Year in 1995 and 1996.

Mr. Toriskie had a distinctive style. He liked to mingle with his audience during breaks. He exuded the good, happy, honest life. His friends knew him as a genuine person and a truly nice man.

He is survived by his wife, Dolores, daughters, Christine Mackerty and Nancy Adams; and grandchildren, Michael and Katie Mackerty.

He will be deeply missed.

#### IRS COMMISSIONER LEGISLATION

### HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 21, 1997*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to ensure that the job of Internal Revenue Service Commissioner is filled by a person well qualified for this important, sensitive position who is insulated from political vagaries and undue influence.

Are certain nonprofit groups the targets of IRS audits? Is the IRS motivated by politics in determining which individuals or groups are audited? Shortly after the White House Travel Office employees were fired in 1993, IRS auditors began auditing UltraAir, a charter air company which had done business with the Travel Office and which was the subject of unfounded rumors about securing Travel Office work using kickbacks. Two years later, and after untold costs to the Government and the airline, UltraAir was cleared of any wrongdoing. Was this audit one of political retribution or an attempt to justify Travel Office firings?

Are IRS functions governed by objective interpretation and application of the tax code or are they directed by other interests? Almost daily, news reports are filled with allegations that the IRS is actually being run by politicians rather than career professionals, mindful of the fact that a well-placed, well-timed audit could have significant political rewards.

Far too many believe the IRS is an agency manipulated by powerful people with political motives. Far too many believe that the IRS is used as a political tool of the presidency—perhaps used to distract the opposition—perhaps an audit will work to divert the opposition's time, attention, and resources toward tax compliance matters rather than in pursuing their ideological goals. Can we call in the IRS and neutralize the opposition?

Ask your constituents what they fear most from the Federal Government and nearly all will say that one of their greatest fears is learning that they are being audited by the IRS. Not only does the IRS audit raise great concern, but for many who find themselves the focus of an audit, those concerns are

compounded by the strongly held view that the agency may be politically motivated.

When the IRS Commissioner serves at the pleasure of the President, the perception is that the Commissioner may be swayed to operate the IRS in a manner that pleases the White House and may even agree to pursue audits as directed or do other things to be assured continued employment. Is this perception reality? Stories abound of misuse or abuse of IRS power for political purposes—in this administration and in previous administrations throughout history.

This is wrong. The IRS must be above partisan politics. Taxpayers—individuals and organizations alike—must be assured that one of the most important agencies in the Federal Government is run in a fair, nonpartisan manner. Americans deserve to rest easy knowing that the IRS is working in an objective, even-handed way to assess and collect taxes owed to the Federal Government. Americans deserve this.

That is why I am today introducing legislation which bolsters the integrity of the Internal Revenue Service by ensuring that the IRS is managed by an independent Commissioner, judged by his or her peers to be well-qualified to run the agency. My bill does two important things. First, the legislation establishes a new objective selection process for the IRS commissioner. Second, the legislation establishes a set 6-year term for the Commissioner, and thereby provides an important degree of independence from the President.

Under the provisions of this legislation, 150 days prior to the expiration of the Commissioner's term, or when a vacancy occurs, a special selection commission is established to consider potential candidates for commissioner. This commission will be comprised of peers qualified to assess the qualifications of potential candidates.

Specifically, the commission will consist of five individuals having professional contacts with the IRS, appointed by the following organizations: First, a representative from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants who is a certified public accountant; second, a representative from the American Bar Association who is a member of the Tax Division; third, a scientist from the National Academy of Scientists; fourth, an engineer from the Institute for Electronic and Electrical Engineers; and fifth, an economist from the American Economics Association.

No later than 60 days after the commission is established, the commission submits to the President a slate of qualified candidates. The President then selects his nominee from that slate. Once approved by the Senate and sworn in, the new IRS commissioner then serves for a 6-year term.

This selection process is similar to the process used to select the comptroller of the General Accounting Office. In that instance, a special commission—comprised of members of the House and Senate—is established to consider potential candidates for the position and to present to the President a slate of qualified candidates for his consideration. This process has worked well for many years and has resulted in well-qualified persons serving as comptroller. I am convinced that the position of IRS Commissioner would benefit from a similar commission comprised of qualified individuals routinely doing business with the IRS. Let us follow the model provided and establish

a selection commission for the IRS Commissioner.

My legislation ensures that strong, qualified candidates are selected for IRS Commissioner and further ensures that the Commissioner is afforded necessary insulation and distance from attempts to make the IRS a tool for the party in power in the White House. We must give taxpayers renewed confidence in the IRS and in its ability to fulfill its mission in an unbiased, even-handed manner. My bill will do just that and I urge its support.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE FORWARD

### HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 21, 1997*

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in paying tribute to the Forward, the king of New York's ethnic newspapers that has given voice to this city's Jewish community since 1897.

For 100 years, Forverts has brought the news to New York's Jewish immigrant community in their native tongue, Yiddish. Considered by many as the exemplar of ethnic newspapers in a metropolis that supports more than 100 of these, the Forward has been hailed by no less than legendary New York newspaperman Pete Hamill as the model for all newspapers.

The story of the Forward begins with one of the landmark developments of this Nation's history, the great European immigration that began during the latter part of the 19th century. The forward, and thousands of journals like it, was published for the 2½ million Jews from Eastern Europe who poured through great immigrant ports like Ellis Island between 1881 and 1925. Its first great editor was Abraham Cahan, a literary genius and acclaimed author who created a daily that was best described as a kind of running Talmudic text for the secular cultural life of the Yiddish-speaking masses. Its mix of sensationalism and seriousness was supplemented by the fictions, essays and poetry of the great names of Yiddish literature. Though he won a Nobel Prize for literature in 1978, Isaac Bashevis Singer first published his fictional work in the Forward.

In the 1920's when the Forward wielded more influence than many of New York's English-language newspapers, this Yiddish daily boasted a circulation of more than a quarter million. In 1947, the paper's 50th anniversary party was so large it was staged in Madison Square Garden. It has even been said that the Forward's influence was so great, that it helped elect Meyer London to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1914.

May 25, 1990, was a historic day in the life of the Forward. After 93 years of publishing solely in Yiddish, the Forward produced its first English-language edition. Not an English translation, but a new entity that shares only a Manhattan office and the rich heritage of the original Forward. Led by president and editor Seth Lipsky, formerly an editor of the Wall Street Journal, the English-language edition has quickly staked its claim as the leading secular newspaper covering the Jewish-American community. Today, the Forward also publishes a Russian-language edition.